



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE  
UNIT 29351  
APO AE 09096-9351


AEPE

27 November 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council Meeting

1. The minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council meeting of 30 October 2015 have been reviewed and approved.
2. The point of contact for this memorandum is COL (Ret) Robert Mentell, President, Army in Europe Retiree Council at [+49] (171) 786-1669 or [robert.a.mentell.vol@mail.mil](mailto:robert.a.mentell.vol@mail.mil).



LARRY D. GOTTARDI  
Deputy Chief of Staff, G1

Encl

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EA Deputy Garrison Manager / Sergeant Major  
EA Garrison RSO  
EA Co-Chair, Chief of Staff, Army, Retiree Council  
EA Member, European Tri-Component Retiree Council  
EA Member, Army in Europe Retiree Council



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE  
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AEPE-AERC

14 November 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanding General, United States Army, Europe, ATTN:  
AECG, Unit 29351, APO AE 09096

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Army in Europe Retiree Council Meeting

1. The 136th meeting of the Army in Europe Retiree Council (AERC) convened at 0905 hours on 30 October 2015 in the USAREUR G1 conference room on Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden. The first meeting was held on 29 August 1980, making the AERC 35 years old.

2. The following persons were present:

a. Members:

COL (Ret) Robert Mentell	President
LTC (Ret) Dave Fulton	Vice President
CW3 (Ret) Sandra Simpson	Secretary
LTC (Ret) Sheldon Dick	Member
COL (Ret) Gary Langford	Member
SGM (Ret) Donald Norris	Member
SGM (Ret) Michael Richter	Member
SGM David Stewart	Member

b. Advisory Members:

COL John Pollock	Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (ADCS), G1, USAREUR, and the USAREUR G1 Advisory Member of the Council
CSM Lynice Thorpe	Acting CSM, IMCOM-Europe, representing Ms. Lynn Lott, Assistant Chief of Staff, G1, IMCOM-Europe, and the IMCOM-Europe Advisory Member of the Council
Mr. Michael Malone	IMCOM-Europe Retirement Services Officer and an Advisory Member of the Council

c. Associate Members:

CDR (USN, Ret) Thomas Brennan	USNAVEUR Associate Members of the Council
COL (USAF, Ret) Heather Osterhaus	USAFE Associate Member of the Council
MSG (USA) Mohammad Bolhassan	ECJ1, USEUCOM, representing SCPO Luis F. Patino (USN), SEL, ECJ1, USEUCOM,

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and the USEUCOM Associate Member of  
the Council

d. Visitors:

GEN (Ret) Gordon R. Sullivan

CSM Cheryl Lyon

Sergeant Major Genc Metaj

Mr. Eduardo Francis

MSgt (USAF) Michelle Wilkerson

Ms. Angela Allman

President, Association of the United States  
Army, and Former Chief of Staff, Army  
Command Sergeant Major, USAREUR  
Kosovo Security Force and special guest of  
CSM Lyon

Chief, Military Policy, DCS, G1, USAREUR  
Senior Enlisted Leader, TRICARE Area  
Office Eurasia-Africa

Benefits Advisor Site Lead – Wiesbaden,  
Office of Transition, Employment and  
Economic Impact, Education Service,  
Department of Veterans Affairs

3. Opening Remarks: (COL Mentell). President welcomed SGM (Retired) Michael Richter to his first in-person meeting as a member of the Council.

(1) He bid farewell to CMSgt (USAF, Ret) Bruce Collet, outgoing USAFE Associate Member of the Council who is returning to the US, but who was not able to attend the meeting.

(2) He welcomed COL Osterhaus as the incoming USAFE Associate Member of the Council, CDR Brennan, the USNAVEUR Associate Member of the Council, who traveled from NS Rota, Spain, and MSG (USA) Bolhassan, who called in by telephone representing the USEUCOM Associate Member of the Council.

4. Review of Agenda and Minutes of 12 August 2015 (All).

a. No changes to the agenda were reported.

b. Minutes were accepted with one change to clarify paragraph 3a: The concept of the AERC was initiated three years prior to the first official AERC meeting.

5. President's Report (COL Mentell).

a. Office Calls with Army in Europe Leadership: The president met with Mr. Larry D. Gottardi, USAREUR DCS, G1, with Robert L. "Rob" Menist Jr., departing USAG Vicenza Garrison Commander and COL Langford met with and briefed Steven M. Marks, the new USAG Vicenza Garrison Commander.

b. Review of the Quarter: The President represented the Council at the USAG Benelux RAD and at the USAG Rheinland-Pfalz/Ramstein AB RAD.

6. DCS, G1, Report (COL Pollock). He reported that transformation is slowing. He presented the Strong Europe Briefing emphasizing the following and responded to questions.

- The CG's intent is to make 30,000 soldiers resemble 300,000 as USAREUR continues to face challenges.
- USAREUR is using National Guard and Reserve forces in rotation to keep strength levels constant and stay engaged with partner nations.
- European Activity Sets are being located in several countries so units can fall in on them as they rotate to Europe for training and exercises.
- A vital part of training includes Freedom Shocks which involve quick notice deployments out of the traditional training sites or garrisons.

7. IMCOM-Europe Report (Mr. Malone).

a. Changes in Region and Garrison Leadership: COL Jimmy M. "Jim" Bradford became the Deputy Region Director in July, the region will receive a new command sergeant major this fall, and USAG Bavaria will receive a new Deputy Garrison Commander in November.

b. Replacement for Region Retirement Services Officer: Mr. Stacy Hendrix will be reporting to IMCOM-Europe on 16 November as the replacement for Mr. Malone.

c. All Casualty Assistance Officers must now follow a checklist and the Chief, USAREUR Casualty Assistance Center, calls the surviving spouse to ascertain whether the checklist was followed.

8. Retirement Services Officer Report (Mr. Malone).

a. The annual number of Retired Soldier deaths that IMCOM-Europe has reported has decreased over the last three years - from 91 in CY 13 to 81 in CY 15.

b. The number of attendees at the CY 15 RADs (less the AE RAD which had not yet been held) increased slightly over CY 14 figures, as did the number of beneficiaries who received financial/DFAS assistance. Attendance was up from 973 in CY 14 to 995 in CY 15 and assistance was up from 97 in CY 14 to 115 in CY 15.

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting, it was noted that the number of beneficiaries receiving financial/DFAS assistance in recent years has been much lower than they were in earlier years when the number averaged 469 from CY 08 to CY 12. A potential explanation for that dramatic difference could stem from the fact that CY 12 was the last year that a DFAS representative participate in-person in all of the principal RADs in the Army in Europe.

c. The dates for the CY 16 Retired Soldier Appreciation Days are:

- 26 May: USAG Ansbach
- 7 Oct: Schinnen Community
- 8 Oct: USAG Benelux
- tbd: USAG Rheinland-Pfalz / Ramstein AB
- 14 Oct: USAG Vicenza
- 20 Oct: USAG Stuttgart
- 21 Oct: USAG Bavaria
- 29 Oct: AE RAD hosted by USAG Wiesbaden

9. Special Visit (GEN Sullivan).

a. GEN Sullivan stated that the new budget which has been passed and sent to the President for signature will have an impact on Retired Service Members. It will introduce the new retirement system which will allow eligible service members to opt in to receive some form of annuity if they depart prior to the twenty year mark. This system will require active participation from the Service Member. Currently retired service members are "grandfathered."

b. Mr. Gottardi provided an overview of the G1 and how the G1 provides support to both active duty Soldiers and Retired Soldiers. Reduction of support staff was disproportionately greater than the reduction in service members. USAREUR HQs is currently undergoing a 40% reduction in personnel. The G1 has picked up a number of missions for which they are not manned, especially in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Republics.

c. The President presented the briefing Supporting Retired Soldier in the Army in Europe emphasizing three main points:

(1) Support for the Retired Military community in the Army in Europe is a team effort with USAREUR establishing theater-level policy, IMCOM-Europe developing procedures and setting standards, and the garrisons delivering retirement services.

(2) While the population of retired Service Members has remained relatively constant over the last ten years (14,532 in FY 04 and 15,684 in FY 14), the number of staff members assigned with providing support has decline (23 in FY 06, and 8 in FY 15) as garrisons have closed and retirement services officers in the enduring garrisons have been reclassified and given many additional duties.

(3) The two primary concerns of Retired Soldiers are the decreasing availability of military health care and the decreasing amount of support available from the garrisons. In Germany, benefits traditionally available to the retired military community are being allowed to erode and withdrawn giving the impression that the US

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Government is not looking out for the well-being of Retired Service Members and their Families and Survivors.

10. Special Visit (CSM Lyon).

a. COL Mentell presented the same briefing as for GEN Sullivan (see paragraph 9 above).

b. The Sergeant Major praised the work of retiree councils at all levels and encouraged the Council to keep her informed as situations change.

11. 2015 Chief of Staff, Army, Retired Soldier Council Issues (All). The following were raised as potential issues for submission to the Army G1 for consideration by the Chief of Staff, Army, Retired Soldier Council.

a. Why are active-duty Soldier and Retired Soldiers who do not reside in Germany not eligible to stay at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort?

b. Why are Retired Soldiers who are ordinarily resident not allowed to take courses from the on-post Education Center?

c. How could official mail be used to assist Retired Soldiers in mailing and receiving parcels that weigh 16-ounces or more when they are to or from an official government office, such as the VA?

d. What can be done to get a DFAS representative to participate in-person in the RADs in Army in Europe?

e. Why does Federal Long Term Health Insurance pay only 80% of costs overseas whereas the full amount is paid in CONUS?

f. Why is in home health care not TRICARE covered service for beneficiaries residing overseas when it is for beneficiaries residing in CONUS?

The Council Executive Committee was charged to consider and develop these and potentially other issues and to coordinate those selected with the other components at the European Tri-Component Retiree Council meeting on 9 December.

12. TRICARE Update (MSgt Wilkerson). TRICARE Service Centers (TSCs) are open to Retired Service Members despite rumors to the contrary. In fact, retired beneficiaries are explicitly included in the TRICARE Overseas Program. There are still many services that the TSCs can provide such as the filing claims, assisting with the portal, and obtaining and clarifying authorizations and referrals. They do not, however, provide translation services.

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13. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Support to Retired Soldiers in the Army in Europe (Ms. Allmon). Ms. Allmon's office (and like offices around Europe) assists veterans with issues that involve multiple organizations in addition to the VA. They provide assistance to veterans both pre-retirement and post-retirement. Most of the claims information can now be put on electronic media. There is a DVA employee stationed at Clay Kaserne in the Soldier for Life Center and is reachable at (0152) 5342-5701.

14. Support Available Upon Death of Retired Soldiers (SGM Stewart). SGM Stewart distributed a draft fact sheet and asked the Council members to review it and provide feedback.

15. Council Administration (COL Mentell).

a. Existing Membership Vacancies:

None

b. Projected Membership Vacancies (thru 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr, CY 16):

None

c. Existing Officer Vacancies:

None

d. Projected Officer Vacancies:

None

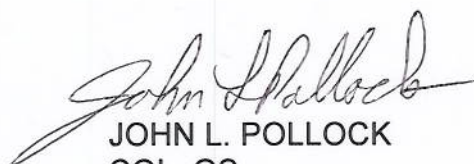
e. Officer Changes (effective 1 January 2016)

COL Mentell to Member

LTC Fulton to President

COL Langford to Vice President

16. Selection of Meeting Date/Adjournment (All). The meeting was adjourned at 1645. The next meeting will be on 3 February 2016 with the intent that the meeting be an in-person meeting.

  
JOHN L. POLLOCK  
COL, GS  
DCS, G1, Representative

  
ROBERT MENTELL  
COL, USA (Retired)  
President